

Wheels in Motion

January 2022





Wheels in Motion

Board Members

President: Feliza Lymburner
239-560-8470
Lymburner23@yahoo.com

Vice President:
open

Past President: Allan Engler
410 244-1100
allanengler@gmail.com

Awards Officer: Ed Conrad
262 497-3011
edconrad@sbcglobal.net

Events Coordinator: Donna Noyes
239 454-5665
miataeventsswf@yahoo.com

Membership: Judy Western & Kathy Engler
941 661-9048 410 919-8261
Both use memmx5swf@yahoo.com

Bill Watts 941 779-7647
wawatts1@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Ron Lindensmith
239 699-6339
mrhandyrsl@hotmail.com

Secretary: Rayanna Edwards
425 922-6059
rayanna1@msn.com

Sunshine Lady: Sandy Cole
239 997-7679
colesandon@gmail.com

Treasurer: Noni Cockrum
239 810-0570
nonicmh@gmail.com

Webmaster: Dana Breda
336 416-7464
dbreda@earthlink.net

Dealer Liaisons:

Cox Mazda: Bill Watts
941 779-7647
wawatts1@gmail.com

Ed Howard Mazda: Dennis Laslo
941 445-0006
djaslo@gmail.com

Mazda of Ft Myers: Ron Kerlin
ronkerlin@gmail.com
239-464-1291

Website:

<http://www.miataclubofsouthwestflorida.com/home.html>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1221394091665789>

Upcoming Events

Miata Club Board Meeting, January 4th (Tuesday) 1pm
Olympia Restaurant, 3245 Tamiami Trail, Port Charlotte, FL.
All members are invited to attend.

Breakfast Socializer, January 12th (Wednesday)
Metro Dinner, 1720 Tamiami Trail Suite 100,
Port Charlotte, FL 33948.
RSVP to Judy at memmx5swf@yahoo.com by January 12th.

Breakfast at Biggies, January 25th (Tuesday) 9:00am
3701 Fowler St, Fort Myers, FL 33901
RSVP to Ron at mrhandyrsl@hotmail.com by January 21st.

Military Heritage Museum tour February 17th (Thursday)
& Lunch at the Village Brewhouse
Details on page
Contact Ron at mrhandyrsl@hotmail.com

Picnic & Club Elections March 19th (Saturday)
At Lakes Park
Details when available

Miata Reunion at Barber Motorsports Park
July 2022 (dates TBA)
Details when available

NEW MEETING LOCATION!!!

Monthly Meeting Thurs, January 13th

**Sea-Craft Waterfront Tiki
3440 Marinatown Lane
North Fort Myers, FL 33903**

**Monthly meetings are
the 2nd Thursday of the month
Dinner at 5pm and meeting at 6pm.
Please RSVP to Kathy Engler by February 3rd
at kathy.engler@gmail.com**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Feliza Lymburner

I would like to give condolences to any of our members that have lost family or friends this year. We many times feel such a loss during this time of year. But if we are strong enough, stop and think about sadness, and replace it with good times we had in the past with these people, we can usually think of something funny that person did that will put a sparkle in our eyes and even make us chuckle. We are all standing in the line of life, young and old. Then one day our number will be called and we will move on. Life is too short. We are thankful for the blessings that we have in our Miata Club, both in friendships and shared good times.

I've only been President for eight months and I came into this role as President not having a clue of what was involved with the job or how the Club was run. But was reassured by those who talked me into it, that everyone would be willing to help...which they have. Larry and I are usually gone from the middle of June till the middle of September, so I missed a few months. Then with Covid and the restrictions due to Covid, things had to be canceled and changed but we all tried to take it in our stride.

There has been such a burst of growth, enthusiasm and participation, there is little reason that you can't find something that you would like to help with and get it going. Just don't sit around, none of us are that young. Don't be intimidated, let's just enjoy life.

I was not aware that some members of the Board of Directors have served their time and wanted to be replaced (Secretary & Treasurer). At the Christmas dinner Larry & I just happened to be sitting with a couple who are new to the Club. They said that they were willing to take on the job of Treasurer. Since she is a bookkeeper what could be better? I understand this time of year there is a lot that to be done by the Treasurer in terms of getting things in order for the end of the year. So, she and her husband will be part of the end of year work. I'm so thankful that they stepped up and are ready to be part of

the Board. This is what makes a strong club. The willingness to help turn the wheel.

Also, we have someone taking over working with the Mazda of Ft Myers dealership. And he's ready to fire them up. Ron our editor has also started a breakfast socializer. And because our club is so stretched out, Judy Western is starting another coffee and chat at the other end of town. All members are welcome to take part in anything going on. We want to make this club a place to enjoy friends. If anyone would like to talk to me or have suggestions or comments don't be afraid to address them. A group this large doesn't always agree on everything. But if the communication is open, anything can be worked out.

Looking forward to a sparkling 2022. God bless with good health and love. Feliza Lymburner, President.

Breakfast at Biggy's

Tuesday, January 25th at 9:00am
3701 Fowler St, Fort Myers, FL 33901

No formal meeting, just a chance to have breakfast and shoot the breeze with some friends (new or old). I don't want to do RSVP for these, but this being a new thing, I'd like to give Bob a 'heads up' on how many people we will have showing up at 9:00am for breakfast! And yes, we've moved it back half an hour so I can sleep in!

Please RSVP to me by email at
mrhandyrs1@hotmail.com
by January 19th

From the Editor's Desk

By Ron Lindensmith

Welcome to 2022 and here's hoping for everybody to have a wonderful Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! I know I'm always a bit more of an optimist than a realist, but I'm looking forward to a great 2022. Kind of literally 'looking' forward as I'm enjoying my 'new' eyes, after having just had cataract surgery! Elaine and I have a few Road Scholar trips scheduled for 2022 (kayaking in the Everglades, hiking in the Grand Canyon & the Hot Air Balloon Fiesta in Albuquerque). I'll be doing auto-x once a month at Buckingham Airfield. I'm sure there will be at least a couple of snorkel trips to the Florida Keys as well.

I intend to do the Miata Reunion at Barber Motorsports Park the last weekend in July. I really want to visit the huge motorcycle and car museum they have there. Maybe I'll even get the chance to do some track time while there. I've raced wheel to wheel on a dozen different tracks and I've done track days or test days at 5 more, but I've missed 2 tracks I really want to drive on, the Daytona 24 Hour track layout and the Barber Motorsports track which does host an IndyCar race each year. BTW Barber Motorsports Park is really very much like a park. Lot of green spaces and big trees and even some big metal sculptures out in the green space around the track.

I'd like to take a moment to thank the handful of members out there that send me ideas, photos, memes, links to other Miata news and even do articles. I especially want to thank the members who contribute a column every month (or almost every month). I really appreciate your help. It make my job a bit more complicated, but a lot more fun!

I'd like to say I'm looking forward to some great Miata Club trips, but even as things are opening back up and almost all of us seniors have been vaccinated, we still are having issues getting anybody to promote and lead trips. If you even think you might be interested in being involved, let me or Donna Noyes know and we'll help you out. It's really quite a simple process.

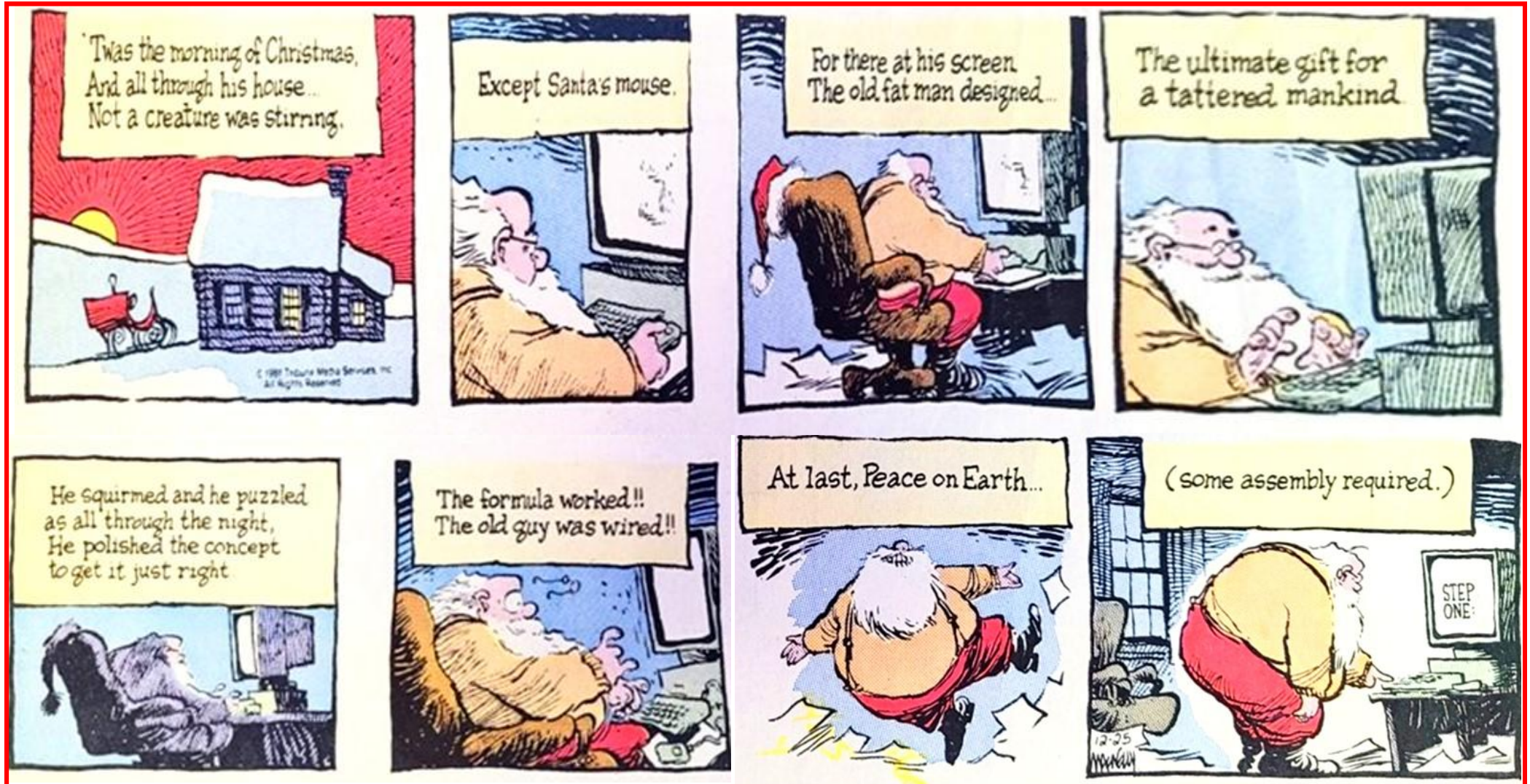
You may have noticed a new look to the front and back covers for Wheels in Motion. Yes, it's my car... again, but what I'm hoping you noticed is the new look! This is what is commonly called a "full page bleed", where the photo runs all the way to the edge of the page. It's a bit trickier to do set up wise, and it takes some special consideration in terms of the cover photo and how all the other things on the cover blend or contrast with the photo. But I'm going to try and do it from now on. It's possible somebody could submit a photo which doesn't work in this format (due to colors or size format) and it's such a good photo I still want to use it. If that happens, I'll switch back to the old format for that month.

I'm still always open to any member sending me photos for either cover or inside. I'd still like to have appropriate photos for the back page and 'THE END' idea. But it doesn't have to be your Miata, or even ANY Miata. We've had 'THE END' photos that have been the back end of a horse, an empty cup of coffee and yes, a full Miata, but one that was at the end of it's life due to being totaled in an accident!

Front covers can be anything as well. If you would like your Miata to be on the front and back, send me photos and I'm very willing to use them. If you are unsure about how to do it, send me an email or call me and I'll try to help. In fact, if you want, and are willing to work with me, I'm even willing to meet up with you and take the photos for you. If we get a photo you really love, I can print a copy of it for you. My printer can do up to 19" x 13" photos. And we can print just the photo, or, if you want, we can print the front cover of the newsletter that uses your photo. Or if you have any other crazy ideas, please fell free to run them by me, I'm always interested in new ideas!

I'd still like to see articles and photos about people's other hobbies (other than their Miata)! Or even stories about your Miata... or your boat, or your RV, or your airplane, or whatever. I just want everybody to get a chance to get to know you a little bit better. I've already done stories about my saltwater aquariums, my photography and lots of stories about my old hot rod Miata... do you really want me to do more about me? I have more hobbies. I can do it if nobody else is willing to step up and help me out here! BTW, that's a threat, not a promise!

Ron's Favorite Version of: 'Twas the Night Before Christmas'



Everyone Needs a Little Sunshine

By Sandy Cole

Happy Holidays to all of our Miata Family:

As I write this, at the last minute, I am reminded of all the things for which we can be thankful. We tend to get so caught up in all the holiday preparations, family, celebrations, and activities that we overlook our many blessings. So please take a moment to reflect in the past year. Thank others for their service, support and efforts. And as you look to the New Year, resolve to do something new in 2022.. Perhaps even volunteer to get more active in the club. It is a fabulous way to really get to know your fellow members and get that satisfaction of being a part of our success.

Thanks to Judy Western and her committee for arranging a fun and festive dinner in December. I also look forward to hearing update on the Key West trip. It also appears that we have been a healthy group. At least that is my assumption, since no one has reached out for extra sunshine support. I need input from each of you, if and when a need arises.

To start off the New Year, there are several birthdays to acknowledge. Please note the following: Peter Ambrus, George Bishko, Glenn Beccue, Edward Cox, Jean Fischer, Jerry Friedman, Delores Golub, Jr., Lucy Kent, Pat LaPointe, Walt Mainberger, Barbara Mallman, Gene McCoy, Parker Moore and, Jan Rosenberg. Please join me in wishing these members a very Happy Birthday.

Happy New Year. Please stay safe and healthy. I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Blessings, Sunshine Sandy



Last month the newsletter ran this photo of a set of 'standard' (SAE) and metric wrenches. I thought that was pretty interesting... OK funny. But Rod Kent one upped the photo. (see below)



Ron,
I have an identical set of metric/SAE adjustable wrenches, but mine are both right and left-handed. I plan to sell them to a millennial on eBay for a fat price. Eat your heart out buddy,
Rod Kent

Membership Notes

By Judy Western

Happy New Year!

By now Christmas is over except for the warm memories. We are still getting new members in weekly, but first of all, I need to apologize to some of the new members. Due to my husband's passing, some of your applications and checks got mixed up with other papers. I have just found them and this will all get fixed over the next few weeks (I'm out of town until New Years).

There are Four things to remember for January:

First is our Club Board Meeting on Tuesday, January 4th at 1pm at the Olympia Restaurant, 3245 Tamiami Trail, Port Charlotte, FL 33952. All members are invited to attend and meet with the Board members, but only Board of Directors get to vote.

Second is my Miata Breakfast (for the more northern Club members) on Wednesday, January 12th at Metro Dinner, 1720 Tamiami Trail Suite 100, Port Charlotte, FL 33948. Please RSVP to Judy at memmx5swf@yahoo.com by January 12th.

Third is our General Membership Meeting on Thursday, January 13th at 5pm at the Sea-Craft Waterfront Tiki restaurant, 3440 Marina-town Lane, North Fort Myers, FL 33903. Show up at 5pm and have dinner (optional) and the meeting starts at 6pm. PLEASE RSVP to Kathy Engler by January 9th at kathy.engler@gmail.com

Fourth is Breakfast at Biggies on Tuesday, January 25th at 9:00am at 3701 Fowler St, Fort Myers, FL 33901. Just a friendly socializer, but please RSVP to Ron at mrhandyrsl@hotmail.com by January 21st.

Again, here's to a Happy & Blessed New Year!

January 4th, 2022 Board Meeting

In March of 2022 we will start a new fiscal year for the Club. That means after a year, 2021, where we didn't ask current members to pay for their renewed Club membership; we will now be collecting dues again. We will also be asking the local Mazda dealerships to start paying for their sponsorship of the Club and for their ad in the newsletter.

There will be an election at the Club Picnic in March of 2022 and any member can run for any position on the Board of Directors (although that almost never happens, no matter how much we wish members would try).

It looks like we still have one opening for a Club Secretary who puts together the agenda for the 4 Board of Directors meeting from the input of the other Directors. Then does the minutes for those 4 Board Meetings after they are done.

We occasionally have a some regular members show up at the Board meetings, which we encourage.

The next one is Tuesday January 4th at 1:00pm
at the Olympia Restaurant,
3245 Tamiami Trail,
Port Charlotte, FL 33952.

Show up, enjoy lunch and even have a chance to have a say about what's going on inside the Club. BTW, just in case you were concerned, the people on the Board of Directors don't bite... once and awhile, one or two may raise their voice a bit, but that's about it!

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MCSWF Christmas Party

"We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year"

Judy Western, Bill Watts and I, your Membership Committee, want to wish each and every one of you a happy holiday and a healthy new year!

Thanks to Judy, our event organizer for the Holiday Party, it seems everyone had a grand time! Held at The Olde World Restau-

rant in Northport for the second year in a row, we had a good turnout of approximately 54 members. It was so heartwarming to see folks that we have not seen in a while and to also welcome several new members to one of our many functions. Hopefully you found the food and service as satisfactory as the membership committee did. The private accommodations mean a lot to a group that enjoys moving around, chatting and laughing!

We would like to thank Ed Conrad for his "Lottery Ticket" game. We actually had more winners this year than at the last holiday party and the prizes were SO much bigger! Ummmm, like maybe there was a \$20 winner? Kudos also go to our lovely "party elf", Sandy Cole! She



created a NEW “Miata Twelve Days of Christmas” sing-a-long! Thank you, Sandy for a fun and relative song!

Thanks again for all those who helped make this a fun annual event!

Best wishes,

Kathy Engler Membership Committee – Communications









2021 Key West Holiday Parade

By Dana Breda

Another Miata Club of Southwest Florida Key West Holiday parade event has come and gone and it was a great time. 8 cars/16 club members met on Friday morning at the Cracker Barrel in Naples. This included two cars from the Music City Miata Club in Nashville, Tennessee who made a long ride down. We were on the road by 8:30 in the morning. Another car met us on the way and two more came by a different route. It was a little chilly at first, but we had the tops down after the first stop. It often rains a little this time of year but we had a great day to travel this time.

On the trip down to the Keys we stopped at the Oasis rest area on US 41 (photo to the right) where we walked the boardwalk and saw the gators (including a 12 footer!), and at the RaceTrac in Florida City for fuel before heading south on US 1. We did lose one car at the gas stop due to a mechanical problem. Our lunch stop was at the Islamorada Fish Company, a restaurant that's part of the Bass Pro complex in Islamorada. The huge tarpon were there as usual for all to enjoy. After a great lunch, we broke ranks and made our way on down to our lodgings in Key West. Our dinner Friday night was at the New York Pasta Garden, a place we've been to many times and that is right off Duval Street. (As an aside, when I called the restaurant for a reservation a couple months before the ride, I was told "Oh you don't need to reserve so early, we know you're coming; just call us a little before you get here").

Saturday morning we all went our own way; some met for breakfast and others just toured the island. Sandy and I had lunch at the Seaside Café at the Mansion, a place we hadn't been before and that's currently rated #1 on Tripadvisor. We went back on Sunday, too!

We met up at the staging area (a local school parking lot) for the parade at 4:00 pm to decorate our Miatas. The parade started a little after 7 pm; a very nice lady with a radio and a "Santa's Helper" T-shirt corralled us and we were off and waving to the kids. I didn't drive my car in the parade this year because of some modifications I've made, but I did get a new video for the website and the Facebook page. Our Miatas have been in this parade every year since 1993 with the exception of 2020 – that's 27 years! Lots of people along the way recognize us and appreciate our participating. If you haven't been there, you cannot imagine how big the crowd can be and how many kids there are. The parade route is a little over a mile and a quarter and while it's usually packed with people, the crowd was a bit smaller this year due to Covid.



Many thanks the members who came and the prep they did for our trip to Key West. We'll do it again next year; put it on your calendar!





Ron's Slightly Altered New Miata

For those of you who don't know me, I owned a 2008 'hot rod' Miata for a long time. It spent 90% of it's time in the shop being worked on (or waiting and waiting to be worked on) and only 10% of it's time in my driveway. It was crazy fast and it was fun to drive, but I spent so little time actually driving it, that we decided to sell it and get a new one.

I wanted it in the beautiful **soul red premium metallic**, but due to the current shortage of new MX5's, and the fact that I wanted a very specific model and option package, it was very hard to find. I had to have a Club with the retractable hardtop and with the option package that included the Recaro seats, BBS wheels, Brembo brakes, Bilstein shocks and black trim around the base and a black spoiler. How hard was it for me to find what I wanted? The 2 I found were both over 1200 miles away and the dealers wanted more than the 'sticker' price. So no beautiful soul red metallic for me. I really didn't want one in black, although they look great... this is SW Florida, so no black. My old 'Frankenstein' Miata was a gray/blue and I didn't want either of the grays that Mazda offers as I felt it would remind me of the old car and all its issues. The only other color available for a Miata Club was white. I still had to do some looking around before I found one in Ocala and even managed to get \$500 off sticker.

It took me a couple of weeks before I really gave in to the look of owning a 'plain Jane' white car. But all the black trim, the black roof and the black wheels helped set it off a bit and I grew to like it. The photo to the left is at my first auto-x with the new car. In the photo to the right, my friend Jon McClain is parked next to me with his all white Subaru BRZ which is almost a twin to the Toyota 86 I owned while messing with the old Miata. Jon's car and mine are very much equal to each other on an auto-x course and we run times within half a second of each other. This particular day, I beat Jon by 0.002 over a 60+

second course. Anyway, that's the start of my life with the new Miata.

But I'm just not one to leave well enough alone, or maybe it's just that I like the things I own to be a little different from what everybody else has? The first thing I did was buy a wider wheel with a polished rim for my street tires. The BBS wheels that came with the car would get the extra sticky tires I use at auto-x. The 205 stock tires on the wider rims looked a bit silly to my eye, so I ordered a set of 235 tires and the combination looks much better. A Miata Club member got a great deal on an expensive set of Bridgestoe tires that came on the car. New the stock tires were over \$900, with less than 5000 miles on them, they sold for \$100!

Then I remove the black pinstripe the dealer had installed. It really didn't do anything to accent the car. One of the changes I made on the old Miata was removing the big Mazda emblem from the front bumper. It made the old car look so much better (at least to my eyes) that I decided to do it to the new car. And if I was going to do the front, I might as well take the Mazda emblem off the rear of the trunk, along with the satellite antenna (I would never use it) and the MX-5 and 'SKYACTIVE' badges off the rear bumper as well.



I was a bit surprised when I found out that the 'MX-5', the 'SKYACTIVE' and both Mazda emblems were all aligned by holes in the body work. Yes, they held on with a special double sided sticky tape, but they also had pins that fit in alignment holes in the trunk and bumpers! I knew I'd be filling the big depression in the front bumper there that Mazda emblem was attached. And I knew it had pins in the back so there would be holes to fill. I also knew the removal of the satellite antenna would leave a 1" x 2" rectangular hole. But now I was looking at hole repairs at the back of the trunk and on the rear bumper! I'm pretty good at bodywork, but mostly on race cars that look good from 100' away as they pass by at 70mph. This was going to need professional help.

I had my favorite body & paint shop do an estimate for the work and was blown away. They would only do it if I agreed to have the entire front & rear bumpers and the trunk completely repainted (white & clearcoat). They wanted just over \$2000. The shop that worked on my old Miata would do it for \$1500. The big issue was all the painting, not the body work.

So I hatched a new plan. I'd do the bodywork and cover the repairs with matching white paint. But without the clearcoat of the entire surface, it was going to show and look messy. But I wanted a racing stripe over the car and that would cover the repairs on the front bumper and the trunk. I'd figure out later just what I'd do about the rear bumper. And I knew what I wanted to do for the stripe. I wanted it black at the very front and it would fade to almost white at the very back.

I shopped a few local installers that do car wraps and found it wasn't cheap, but it was less than half the cost of the body shop estimates. I ended up going to Jackson Signs in Port Charlotte. First consideration was they worked with Dick Fischer and did a great job on his hood and stripe (photos to the right). And we also came up with an idea to do a black to white fade below the rear spoiler to cover the repairs made to the rear bumper! Their first try wasn't up to my expectations, and they willingly offered to do the back end over again, no charge. Now it's just what I wanted.

So I set about removing all the badges. The front bumper was by

far the hardest to get right. It was frustrating enough that I didn't take any photos while I was doing the repair. Filling the depression isn't that hard, but getting the right curved contour to match the rest of the bumper took a bit of doing... and re doing... and redoing!

The trunk and back bumper were easier as they were just filling holes and the body lines were flat and smooth. I

was pretty proud with the finished product. If you look close, you can see the small rectangle on the trunk where the antenna was. The hole in the back of the trunk and the bumper almost disappeared with a



coat of matching white paint! Now the stripe and the rear wrap are done and I'm quite



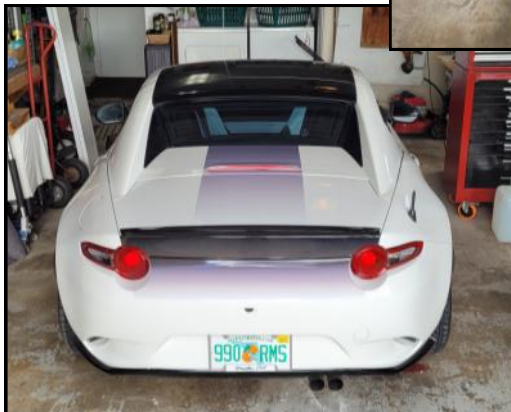
happy with the way it has turned out. I've even been surprised by having people look at the car and ask what make it is. I think when most non-sports car types think of a Miata, they think of something like this.



The ND may have been around since 2016, but they just haven't sunk in with the general public yet. I've had a few people pull up next to me at a traffic light and ask that make the car is! I forget who it was, but

somebody joked I should tell people that it's a home built kit car!

The front stripe doesn't fade too much and I still need to fill the gap between the hood and the bumper so the white line doesn't show. But I love the very 'clean' look of the front end without the Mazda emblem. Goodwin Racing sells an aftermarket grille for the ND that fills the front end opening and hides the



bumper cover at the top of the stock grille. I'm seriously considering it.

The stripe over the trunk fades more and the new wrap below the spoiler now starts black and ends up white enough that it almost blends into the body color.

Now I'm also considering having the top of the door panels inside the car wrapped. Currently they are white, like the car. I'm thinking that I have it done like the stripe, starting black at the dashboard and fading to white a few inches before it gets to the back edge of the door.



A YULETIDE STORY

By C.C. Williford

T'was the night before Yuletide and all through the glen.
Not a creature was stirring, not a fox, not a hen.

A mantle of snow shone brightly that night,
As it lay on the ground, reflecting moonlight.

The faeries were nestled all snug in their trees,
unmindful of flurries and a chilly north breeze!

The elves and the gnomes were down in their burrows,
sleeping like babes in their soft earthen furrows.

When low! The earth moved with a thunderous quake,
causing chairs to fall over and dishes to break.

The Little Folk scrambled to get on their feet,
then raced to the river, where they usually meet.

“What happened?” they wondered, they questioned, they probed,
as they shivered in night clothes, some bare-armed, some robed.

“What caused the earth’s shudder? What caused her to shiver?”
They all spoke at once as they stood by the river.

Then what to their wondering eyes should appear,
but a shining gold light in the shape of a sphere.

It blinked and it twinkled, it winked like an eye,
then it flew straight up and was lost in the sky.

Before they could murmur, before they could bustle,
there emerged from the crowd, with a swish and a rustle,

a stately old crone with her hand on a cane,
resplendent in green with a flowing white mane.

As she passed by them the old crone’s perfume,
smelling of meadows and flowers abloom,

made each of the fey folk think of the spring,
when the earth wakes from slumber and the birds start to sing.

“My name is Gaia,” the old crone proclaimed
in a voice that at once was both wild and tamed,

“I’ve come to remind you, for you seem to forget,
that Yule is the time of re-birth, and yet...”

“I see no hearth fires, hear no music, no bells.
The air isn’t filled with rich fragrant smells

of baking and roasting, and simmering stews,
of cider that’s mulled or other hot brews.”

“There aren’t any children at play in the snow,
or houses lit up by candles’ glow.

Have you forgotten, my children, about all the fun
of celebrating the rebirth of the sun?”

She looked at the fey folk, her eyes going round,
as they shuffled their feet and stared at the ground.

Then she smiled the smile that brings light to the day,
“Come, my children,” she said, “Let’s play.”

They gathered the mistletoe, gathered the holly,
threw off the drab and drew on the jolly.

They lit a big bonfire, and they danced and they sang.
They brought out the bells and clapped when they rang.

They strung lights on the trees, and bows, oh so merry,
in colors of cranberry, bayberry, cherry.

They built giant snowmen and adorned them with hats,
then surrounded them with snow birds, and snow cats and bats.

Then just before dawn, at the end of their fest,
Before they went homeward to seek out their rest,

the fey folk they gathered ‘round their favorite oak tree
and welcomed the sun ‘neath the tree’s finery.

They were just reaching home when it suddenly came,
the gold light returned like an arrow-shot flame.

It lit on the tree top where they could see from afar,
the golden-like sphere turned into a star.

The old crone just smiled at the beautiful sight,

“Happy Yuletide, my children,” and she whispered. “Good night.”

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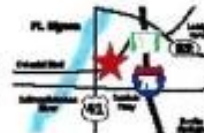
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Odds are that almost nobody in the Miata Club of Southwest Florida can identify where this photo was taken, much less when and what event was going on here?

Give up?

It's the parking lot at The Shops at Surfside 2354 Surfside Blvd, Cape Coral, FL 33991. It was taken at a Car & Coffee car show. I believe it was taken at the December 2021 event because I think I can see my car and Dana Breda's car in the photo.

There will be another Cars & Coffee event here in February *(date to be confirmed, but I think it will be Sunday the 6th)*. It was an interesting event with hot rods, classics, super cars, and even a few race cars, trucks, motorcycles and kit cars as well. There were several other Miatas there, but I didn't get to meet up with any of the owners. I'd like to get some of our members and some of the Sun Coast Miata group members to show up and all park together as close to the show cars as we can get. I think our two groups could possibly foster an interesting relationship given time. I think it might prove to be the old adage "Youth and enthusiasm vs wisdom and old age!"

Military Heritage Museum

**Mark your calendar
Thursday, February 17th**

Meeting at the Starbucks at the Shops at Surfside Mall
Veterans Parkway and Surfside
Cape Coral, FL

We will depart at 9:30 and drive up Burnt Store Road to Punta Gorda and then 41 to the river. Nearly the last left turn before you are on the bridge is Marion Ave.
Miss it and you have 2 more chances to turn left.
Miss them and you are going over the bridge!
Detailed maps available by email or at our meeting point.

The Museum is at 900 West Marion Ave, Punta Gorda 33950
We will park on the lawn on the river side of the museum just off W.Retta Esplanade between the road and the river.

The Museum is open from 10 am to 4pm.
Docent led tours begin at 11am.
There are 4 Flight Simulators (3 to 4 people / hour)
Virtual Reality Simulators
A 45 minute movie starts at 1pm



We will have reservations at the Village Brew House at Fisherman's Village

They have indoor and outdoor seating and A wide menu to choose from.

<https://www.thevillagebrewhouse.com/menu/>

It's 2 to 3 long blocks from the Museum
You can walk, drive your car or call (914)916-0866 for a gulf cart shuttle that can take up to 5 people

**Our group rate is \$9 each!
RSVP me at mrhandyrs1@hotmail.com
and send a check for \$9 to:**

**Miata Club of Southwest Florida
1123 SW 41st Street
Cape Coral, FL 33914**

The museum would like to know how many people want to have the docent lead tour... so let me know!

Also let me know if you want to join us for lunch at 2pm at the Village Brewhouse and I'll make the reservation.

I need your RSVP by the end of the day on Tuesday January 25th.

Payment must be received by Tuesday February 1st.

Feel free to email me if you have questions:
mrhandyrs1@hotmail.com

Everything But the Most Expensive Miata Is Manual Now

By Owen Bellwood

The Mazda Miata is a firm favorite here in the office, so whenever there's an update to the beloved two-seater we pay close attention. For 2022, there's big news for all of the stick-shift fans as Mazda is killing off the automatic gearbox on two of the car's trims. Mazda agrees a manual gearbox is the only option for the Miata, leaving an automatic option almost obsolete for this next model

In 2022, if you buy either the entry-level Miata Sport or mid-tier Club models, Mazda will only offer you a six-speed manual. If you want an automatic gearbox in your pocket-sized sports car, you'll have to opt for the top-tier Miata Grand Touring.

That automatic Miata Grand Touring starts at \$32,300 for the convertible, while the manual will set you back at least \$32,800.

If that sounds like a lot for a Miata, don't worry as the manual cars are more reasonable.

For 2022, the Sport trim Miata and its glorious manual gearbox will start at \$27,300, and the mid-tier Miata Club starts at \$30,800. There's also an option to spec your Miata Club with Brembo brakes, BBS wheels and Recaro seats, which will set you back \$35,300.

Reduced gearbox options aren't the only changes coming to the 2022 car.

Other notable new features on next year's Miata include the fact that it now comes in white... I mean "Platinum Quartz Metallic." It's a

pearlescent white color, called Platinum Quartz Metallic, and a new shade of interior leather, which Mazda has dubbed Terracotta Nappa.

On the tech side, the new Miata comes with Mazda's latest handling software called Kinematic Posture Control (KPC). The new system manages braking across all four wheels to improve handling in high-g corners. Mazda says this has all been done to boost "confidence and driving enjoyment."

The new car also has a host of weight-saving features, like aluminum fenders, hood and trunk, and an aluminum power plant frame.

Mazda has also upped to standard components on the 2022 car, which now includes anti-lock braking, front ventilated disc brakes, rear disc brakes with aluminum calipers, front and rear stabilizer bars, front double wishbone suspension, and monotube dampers, amongst other things.



The End of the Cheap Miata is Near

By Preston Lerner from Haggerty.com

When Vivian Topaz was 14, she told her father she wanted a Miata. He immediately vetoed the idea.

“He said, ‘You’re not getting a Miata. It’s a hairdresser’s car,’” she recalls, “I said, ‘No! It’s the cutest car ever.’ I found one in Ojai on a dirt lot. The guy wanted \$700 for it. I’m like, ‘Oh, my god! Dad, we have to get that car!’”

The 1995 Miata had “horrible” paint, a failing water pump, and an improperly timed ignition. But Topaz and her father were able to drive it home. Three years later, she’s put 20,000 miles on the car, which now features a roll cage, new body panels, an upgraded suspension and bigger wheels and tires.

“The Miata is the perfect first car,” she says. “It’s cheap, there are so



many aftermarket applications for it, and I can work on it by myself.” Topaz, a certified welder, has only one complaint about the Miata. “Prices are going crazy,” she says. “You used to be able to get cars for 500 or 600 bucks. Now they’re \$1500 or two grand.”

Granted, \$2000 still sounds like an epic bargain, especially if you normally haunt Bring a Trailer auctions. But Miata prices are skyrocketing just as quickly as you move up the food chain. During the past year, for example, the *Hagerty Price Guide* shows that the value of a condition #2 (Excellent) 1992 Miata has risen from a tick under \$15,500 to \$18,300.

Of course, the Miata isn’t a complete outlier in the collectible-car world. The prices of Japanese sports cars in general have zoomed ever upward as the love affair with “youngtimer” models continues to flourish. But the Miata isn’t riding this wave so much as it’s helping propel it. Prices of 1990-97 Matas have climbed by 130 percent during the past five years, according to Haggerty data—that’s nearly twice the national average.

Cars become collectible for a variety of reasons. Scarcity, cachet, looks, performance, nostalgia, perversity, whatever. In the case of the Miata, the most important reason for its success is its fundamental goodness.

Introduced in 1989 as a 1990 model, the MX-5, as the car is sold elsewhere in the world, married the pluck and open-air panache of British roadsters with the build-quality and indestructibility of Japanese family sedans. It was an immediate hit with both car-buying consumers and car-reviewing journalists, and it’s never fallen out of favor. “Miata is always the answer” is such a long-running cliché that it’s become a post-ironic meme.

Although the Miata has gone through four iterations over the past 32 years, most people associate the nameplate with the original car, a cute-as-a-bug ragtop with flip-up headlights known internally as the NA. The second-generation NB (1999-2005) and third-gen NC (2006-15) moved progressively further away from the purity of the NA. The current ND, which debuted in 2016, makes a good-faith effort to return to the *jinba ittai* (i.e. horse and rider) concept baked into the first Miata. But the NA remains sui generis, a unicorn that defies replication.

Even as the world has changed, the first-gen MX-5 never went out of style. And it’s now finding a new audience with young buyers who see the car as an exemplar of an automotive world they were born too late to enjoy. According to Haggerty’s research, members of the Gen X cohort (born between 1965 and 1981) don’t have much interest in Matas, period, maybe because they grew up with them, and familiarity breeds contempt. But millennials and Gen Zers have a yen for the NA.

Larry Oka, who owns one of the largest and longest-running race-car rental businesses on the West Coast, focuses on first-gen Miatas and nothing but first-gen Miatas. Since he's always looking for cars to transform into Spec Miatas or freshen up for resale, he keeps a close eye on the market, and he's got a theory about why prices are climbing so inexorably.

"The high school kids are snatching them up because they're fun cars with a stick shift. They're also entry-level, and they're fully depreciated," he says. "They want something with an airbag for their parents, that gets 30 miles per gallon on regular gas and that's easy to work on in their driveway." In other words, an NA.

Generally speaking, younger buyers don't have a lot of money to spend, which means they often start with beaters that they use as daily drivers. The idea of returning a car to stock form seems to be an alien notion to owners who'd rather invest in modifications that make their cars faster or lower or more comfortable.

Jack Heideman, a 25-year-old engineer, bought a '91 for \$1100 six years ago. "I was looking to get a cheap car to autocross," he says. "My goal was to find a Miata for a thousand bucks. The alignment bolts were rusted solid into the bushings, so it turned into a nightmare." Although Heideman modded the car extensively, he returned it to stock form before selling it last year. Most owners aren't so fastidious. "Most of the cars I see now are hacked," he says.

But NAs don't appeal only to young consumers on tight budgets. Hagerty data also shows that they're also popular with boomers and so-called pre-boomers. Older and with more disposable income, these buyers are willing to pay a premium for nicer cars that embody the qualities that made the Miata an instant classic when it debuted.

John Linney owned a right-hand drive MX-5, which he thought of as a bulletproof Lotus Elan, while he was living in the United Kingdom in the 1990s. Now 62 and settled in California, he recently bought a 1991 model with 31,000 miles from the original owner.

"It's a perfectly balanced car," he says. "It seems to run out of traction at the same time it runs out of power. But the lack of power is an

attribute rather than a bug. The Miata is a car you can drive on the limit on

public roads without risking life and limb. It's more fun to drive a slow car fast than a fast car slow."

Another selling point of the NA is dependability. Yes, most Miata projects can be tackled by a modestly accomplished shade-tree mechanic. But unless the car has been hot-rodded injudiciously or run into the ground, it shouldn't require much in the way of DIY wrenching.

"I've driven three NAs over the Alcan Highway to Alaska from Raleigh, Kansas City and Sacramento, says Kevin Kastner, director of marketing and sales at Moss Motors, a major Miata aftermarket parts supplier. "There is no car that offers nearly as much fun, simplicity, and reliability."

Fun, simplicity and reliability will always be part of the Miata recipe, but in terms of affordability, things are shifting. Alas, the days of first-gen bargains are receding in the rear-view mirror. Even on Craigslist and Facebook Marketplace, it's rare to see anything under \$2500, and most cars slot in between \$5000 and \$10,000. (The average condition #3, or "Good" condition value for an NA in the *Hagerty Price Guide* is \$9,400.) But what's really stunning, at least to people who've following watching this segment for a while, is the proliferation of high-end sales. The average condition #1 (Concours) value in the *Hagerty Price Guide* for an NA is a whopping \$31,900.

"We have seen an increase in 'restoration-style' products for the NA," says Keith Tanner, director of ecommerce and systems at Flyin' Miata, another big aftermarket parts company. "Still lots of pure performance stuff, people are more willing to pay \$2000 for a suspension today than they were 20 years ago, but people are putting the money into them to fix them up instead of leaving them ratty."

Which begs the question: Can prices keep rising, or has the spike been the product of the lockdown, social-media enthusiasm or what economists call irrational exuberance? It's odd to think about a car built in such large numbers (more than 400,000 units from 1989 to 1997) graduating to collectible status. Then again, who doesn't like the Miata? Even as automobiles powered by internal-combustion engines are being increasingly demonized, the spunky Japanese two-seater still has the power to put smiles on people's faces. And you know what they say: **Miata is always the answer.**

Miata Designer Shunji Tanaka Dies at 75

By Chris Perkins Road & Track news Dec 21,2021

The original Mazda Miata had many fathers. Bob Hall, the journalist-turned-product-planner who originally pitched the idea to Mazda boss Kenichi Yamamoto; Tom Matano and Mark Jordan, who designed the first concepts at Mazda's California studio and laid out a detailed future for the sports car; Toshihiko Hirai, the chief engineer, whom Hall credits as the true patriarch. There are others, including Shunji Tanaka, who turned the original concept into the production car we know and love. Per a Facebook post from a Japanese Miata club he was involved with, Tanaka-san died earlier this month, at the age of 75.

Born in 1945, there is unfortunately little information on Tanaka's early life and career on the English-language internet, but his contributions to the Miata are documented in Brian Long's Mazda MX-5 Miata. While also working on what became the sixth-generation 929 in mid 1986, Tanaka—by then a 15-year Mazda veteran—was given the task of refining the designs created by Mazda's California studio. "When I found out that he was going to be the chief designer for the project, I felt that we got the right guy to maintain the subtle nuances



of the surfaces we created in California studio," Matano told R&T in an email.

In an interview published in Long's book, Tanaka said he wanted the car to reflect Japanese culture and values. He drew particular inspiration from the Noh masks—which appear differently depending on the way they're looked at—made in his spare time.

Every time I take up a chisel to create a Noh mask, I always respect the traditional simplicity and perfect curves which have been handed down over the centuries. Many different feelings and wishes are held within the mask, their appearance depending on the light and changing shadows. It is very characteristic of the Japanese, and completely different from the western notion of expressing perfection concretely.

I also wanted to enclose the rhythms—peace, motion, and silence—which exist in the Japanese heart, into the form of the sports car. For peace, I looked towards a statue of the Goddess of Mercy for inspiration, a truly graceful symbol. For motion, I thought of a wild animal when it's hunting, running fast and accurate, and for silence, the tranquility of nature. I wanted the car to melt into the scenery, reflecting light over its curved surfaces.



I wanted to establish a new mould which was dynamic and original, yet distinctly Japanese in its origin—a mixture of sensitivity and modern technology.

Tanaka later joined Kawasaki motorcycles as its chief designer, and was involved with Miata clubs in Japan until his death.

"He came from sculpture and he was the only one who could translate the emotion we induced onto the exterior design of the Miata," Matano says. "He and Hirai, the program manager, translated our concept, theme and nuances to what became the NA."

25 Cars That Have Defined Our Scene

By David S. Wallens

Editor's note: This article originally ran in the Dec. 2009 issue of Grassroots Motorsports.

Our world may be defined by its people and events, but it's hard to go far without wheels. It's the cars that add the sights, sounds and smoke to motorsports.



Each automotive subculture seems to favor different machines. Some go for '32 Fords and straight-axle Gassers, while others make a bee line for Hemi Challengers and big-block Chevilles. Our group tends to side with cars that handle: low, responsive and glued to the road.

We've been at this magazine thing for a quarter century now, and we've watched a steady procession of cars move through our scene.

Some made their mark in a big, big way, while others kind of fizzled out soon after their introduction.

The ones with the real staying power have possessed the right attributes for our needs: speed, handling, versatility, durability and thrift. The ability to be upgraded and modified hasn't hurt, either.

After much debate and deliberation, we have come up with the 25 cars that left the biggest impact on our automotive world. We even ranked them in order. In our opinion, these are the cars that should be celebrated. After all, they're the stars of our scene.

Disagree? That's cool. A little debate is good for the soul.

1) Mazda Miata: Some Are Born to Run, Some Are Born to Race

The traditional sports car scene was a stark place as the '80s came to a close. The MGB as well as the Triumph TR7 and TR8 were long gone. Fiat had already left the building, while the Alfa Romeo Spider was on its last legs. The Porsche Boxster, Honda S2000 and Toyota MR2 Spyder didn't yet exist.

Please give Mazda some applause for seeing a world that could still appreciate a top-down, two-place roadster. Their Miata arrived for the 1990 model year and pretty much rewrote the book.

A successful sports car didn't need to possess a zillion horsepower or cost nearly as many dollars. It needed just a few important attributes, including a great suspension, willing engine and a light fighting weight. The fold-down top and rock-solid construction were merely bonuses.

The Miata has now been with us for 20 years and through two redesigns. Despite the march of time, the later cars uphold the original's mission. And the early ones haven't been cast away, either. They're still successful at just about everything, from road racing to autocrossing to allowing enthusiasts to enjoy sunny drives. As our message board regulars often joke, the answer to nearly any question is "Miata."

The rest of the Grassroots List of the top 25

- 2) BMW 3 Series: The Ultimate Driving Machine
- 3) Honda Civic, CRX, Acura Integra: Technology You Can Enjoy
- 4) Ford Mustang: A Horse of a Different Color
- 5) Porsche 911: There Is No Substitute
- 6) Chevy Corvette: An American Revolution
- 7) Chevy Camaro: The Way It Looks Is the Way It Goes
- 8) MINI Cooper: Let's Motor
- 9) Factory Five Roadster: Born on the Right Side of the Tracks
- 10) Nissan Z-car: Shift Expectations
- 11) Volkswagen GTI: Kick a Little Asphalt
- 12) Mazda RX-7 & RX-8: Passion for the Road
- 13) Subaru Impreza: Driven by What's Inside
- 14) SCCA Spec Racer: How Spec Is Done
- 15) Toyota MR2: Setting a New Pace
- 16) Lotus Elise: Less Is More
- 17) Mitsubishi Lancer Evo: Driven to Thrill
- 18) Chrysler and Mitsubishi DSM: Performance Spoken Fluently
- 19) Dodge Neon & Omni: No More Mr. Nice Guy
- 20) Honda S2000: Man, Then Machine
- 21) Porsche Boxster: As Much Fun As You Can Have and Still Run for Office Someday
- 22) Toyota Celica & Corolla: Toyota's Version of the Bullet Train
- 23) Nissan Sentra SE-R: It Picks on Cars Twice Its Size
- 24) Dodge Viper: Grab Life
- 25) Volvo 2- & 7-series: Fall In Love in 6.8 Seconds Flat

This list and all that Grassroots Motorsports had to say about each of these cars can be seen at: <https://grassrootsmotorsports.com/articles/25-cars-have-defined-our-scene/>

*Miata Club of SW Florida newsletter editor's comment:
I have owned 5 of these 25 and have driven 10 of the others at one time or another. Personally, I would move the Toyota MR2, the Mazda RX7 & RX8 further up the list and add in the Fiat X1/9.*



CONRAD GREW TO RESENT THE FOUR CALLING BIRDS HIS TRUE LOVE GAVE TO HIM.



THE END